



*Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (1771), an oil painting on canvas by Benjamin West; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia

**Early Colonists** worked to maintain good relations with the Indians. William Penn, arms extended, made his first treaty with the Indians in 1682. His fair dealings with the Indians helped the colony of Pennsylvania grow and prosper.

## UNITED STATES HISTORY: 1607-1753 / *The Colonial Heritage*

The first British attempt to establish a colony in what is now the United States took place in 1585. Sir Walter Raleigh sent settlers to Roanoke Island, off the coast of North Carolina. But this attempt at colonization failed (see **LOST COLONY**).

In 1607, a small band of about 100 British colonists reached the coast near Chesapeake Bay. They founded Jamestown, the first permanent British settlement in North America (see **JAMESTOWN**). During the next 150 years, a steady stream of colonists came to America and settled near the coast. Most of them were British, but they also included people from France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, and other countries.

The earliest colonists faced great hardship and danger in the wilderness. They suffered from lack of food and from disease, and were sometimes attacked by Indians. But the colonists soon established productive farms and plantations; built towns, roads, churches, and schools; and began many small industries. They prospered economically and, for the most part, maintained peaceful relations with the Indians.

The American colonists also developed political practices and social beliefs that have had a major influence on the history of the United States. They made strides toward democratic government, and they placed

a high value on individual freedom and on hard work as a means of getting ahead.

### **The Thirteen Colonies**

In the early 1600's, the British king began granting charters for the purpose of establishing colonies in America. The charters went to companies of merchants and to individuals called *proprietors*. The merchants and proprietors were responsible for recruiting people to settle in America and, at first, for governing them. By the mid-1700's, most of the settlements had been formed into 13 British colonies. Each colony had a governor and legislature, but each was under the ultimate control of the British government.

The 13 colonies stretched from what is now Maine in the north to Georgia in the south. They included the New England Colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire in the far north; the Middle Colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware; Virginia and Maryland along Chesapeake Bay; and the Southern Colonies of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia in the far south.

**Virginia and Maryland** were among the earliest British colonies. They were founded for different reasons, but they developed in much the same way.

Many Indian  
Treaties  
Kept & Broken